

# THE BAPTIST Record

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No. 10

Week of Prayer for  
NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS  
March 4-11, 2007

Change Your World



National Goal: \$57,000,000  
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## Hammond nominated to lead NAMB

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP and local reports) — The president search committee of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) trustees recommended on March 1 that Geoffrey A. Hammond, currently senior associate director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV) state convention, become the Southern Baptist entity's next president.

He replaces Robert E. Reccord, who resigned in April 2006 under a cloud of questions about his management style and the agency's expenditures.

NAMB's trustees will vote on the recommendation at a March 20-21 special meeting at the agency's headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga. If approved, Hammond would become NAMB's president-elect, officially beginning his duties at the May 8-9 board meeting and starting fulltime on May 22, search committee chairman Greg Faulls said.

"Dr. Hammond has proven himself to be a successful leader, strategist, and practitioner in church planting missions and evangelism throughout his ministry career," Faulls said. "NAMB is a missions agency in need of a strong leader with the mind of a missiologist and with a vision to strategically mobilize an army of missionaries who will spread the Gospel and plant churches throughout an ethnically diverse North America."

Hammond, age 49, was born in Nigeria to missionary parents serving with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) International Mission Board. He earned the equivalent of a business degree in administration in Zimbabwe, passing the final examination of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators (UK).

He is a graduate of Spurgeon's Seminary in London, England, and he holds a doctor of ministry degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, majoring in evangelism and missions.

Hammond has served throughout his career as pastor, church planter, staff member of mega-churches, IMB missionary to Brazil, seminary professor, director of missions, NAMB-appointed missionary, and church planting strategist.



Hammond

"As a third-generation missionary," Hammond said, "my heartbeat has always been reaching people with the Gospel no matter where they live. I believe the North American Mission Board is the greatest missionary agency for reaching North America for Christ and it is the greatest honor of my life to be nominated for this position."

"Our president search committee has been thorough and prayerful in seeking God's man for NAMB," said Bill Curtis, trustee chairman. "I can say with confidence that the search committee has worked diligently on the behalf of Southern Baptists and the board throughout this process, and they look forward to bringing a report on the journey and to presenting Dr. Geoff Hammond at the March board meeting."

Curtis also said, "I wish to express my gratitude to every member of the NAMB staff. During the past year I have observed our wonderful staff rise to every challenge with faith and cooperation. As we prepare to move into a new phase of NAMB's history, I am confident that the staff and our committed missionaries will continue to rise as they work together in advancing evangelism, church planting and the strengthening of churches throughout North America."

NAMB, an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, is led by a 60-member board of trustees. After the resignation of Reccord, then-board chairman Barry Holcomb appointed a nine-member search committee: chairman Greg Faulls of Kentucky, vice chairman David Crump of Oklahoma, Dennis Culbreth of Virginia, Ellie Ficken of Alabama, Terry Fox of Kansas, Barbara McCormick of South Carolina, Michael Palmer of Idaho, Ryan Palmer of Maryland, and Jeff Shirley of Texas.

NAMB in partnership with state conventions has placed 5,000 missionaries throughout the United States and Canada for the primary purpose of evangelization and church planting. Southern Baptists support the work of NAMB primarily through Cooperative Program giving and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

## Miss. CP down in February

Gifts to the work of the Lord through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) in February dropped below both last month's record-setting total and the same month in the previous year, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. The February total of \$2,640,655, was \$1,342,220, or 33.7%, lower than the \$3,982,875 given last month, and \$147,698, or 5.3%, below the total given in February 2006. Total Mississippi CP giving for the current fiscal year, which runs from January-December, stands at \$6,623,530, a rise of \$337,454, or 5.4%, over last year's giving through February and \$1,092,041, or 19.7%, ahead of current budget needs. The 2007 Mississippi CP budget of \$33,188,934, was approved by messengers to the 2006 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. A total of \$2,765,745, is needed each month to meet the convention board's budget for 2007. In addition to helping support more than 10,700 missionaries in the U.S. and around the world through affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mississippi CP helps fund such programs as the wMu Hispanic Women's Retreat on March 16-17 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton, the Young Musicians Festival on March 31 at First Church, Clinton, and Lad/Crusader Day on April 14 at Central Hills Retreat, Kosciusko.

## SBC CP drops slightly

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Giving to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program in February was \$19,736,794, \$259,798, or 1.3%, below giving in January of \$19,996,592, but 21.5%, or \$3,493,132 above the \$16,243,662, received in February 2006, according to a news release from SBC Executive President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. As of Feb. 28, the year-to-date total of \$87,085,551.85 for Cooperative Program (CP) missions is \$4,969,399 ahead of the \$82,116,153 received at the same point in 2006. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year. Designated giving of \$93,466,831 for the same year-to-date period is 17.2%, or \$13,732,516, above gifts of \$79,734,315 received at this point last year. The \$56,430,565 in designated gifts received last month is \$15,238,554 above the \$41,192,010 received in February 2006, an increase of 37%. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$87,085,552 is 106.6% of the \$81,645,176 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. The Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 2005-06 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.



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**S**ay the word "missions" to Southern Baptists, and for most of us a vision springs to mind of some far-away place on the other side of the globe with strange-speaking people in stranger-still garb. We like to think of missions as a thrilling, Indiana Jones jungle adventure filled with breath-taking action and unforgettable experiences.

To be sure, there are Southern Baptist missionaries on the other side of the globe right now who are involved in situations almost as exotic as those fast-paced movies — and there are missionaries on the other side of the globe whose ministries are potentially much more dangerous than any movie could portray.

They certainly deserve our prayers and our sacrificial financial support, but they aren't the only ones. There are our North American missionaries — we called them "home missionaries" in the days of the old Home Mission Board — and their Kingdom ministries are just as important and just as much in need of our prayers and support.

The two main ways Southern Baptists support North American missions are through our Cooperative Program gifts, a percentage of which goes to help fund the ministries of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) headquartered in metro Atlanta, and through the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) for North American Missions.

The importance of "home" missions cannot be overemphasized. In the U.S., Canada, and their territories — focal areas of NAMB ministries — there are hundreds of millions of unbelievers. We Americans like to describe ourselves as a Christian nation, but it would appear that we've got

plenty of work left to do in our own backyard.

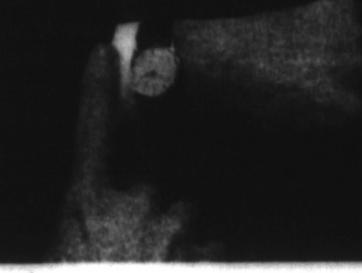
The urgency of that work is underscored by the numbers of zealous "missionaries" of other religions that are pouring into this country, in an effort to convert us to their way of life and religion. Unfortunately, they are making great inroads as their houses of worship spring up in neighborhoods all across the U.S. — including in Mississippi.

AAEO provides major funding for NAMB's two major thrusts in the U.S. and Canada: evangelism and church planting. NAMB missionaries minister to people's needs in more than 100 language groups in urban and rural settings, opening their arms to such diverse populations as seniors, the illiterate, non-English speakers, substance abusers, prison inmates and their families, the disabled, migrants, and even vacationers, to name only a few.

There are currently over 5,300 missionaries supported by NAMB and its partners serving in the U.S., Canada, and their territories, backed by hundreds of thousands of volunteers each year. More than 2,600 NAMB-endorsed chaplains serve in the U.S. military, correctional facilities, hospitals, and corporate settings. All these workers see many thousands of professions of faith each year.

In addition, Southern Baptists have set a goal of starting more than 2,000 churches annually in the NAMB's geographical area of responsibility.

## Don't forget!



**Daylight Saving Time  
March 11, 2007**

Even with these impressive numbers, however, we're falling behind population growth and the encroachment of competing religions at an alarming rate. It's time we caught up with the Lord and His Kingdom work.

One of the best ways we can do that is through giving to AAEO. In 2006, Southern Baptists gave over \$57,000,000 to the offering. The goal this

year is \$57,000,000. We exceeded that amount last year, and we should exceed it again this year. Here's how the \$57,000,000 will be spent:

- Missionary Support: \$42,750,000, or 75%. This amount includes salaries, health benefits, missionary orientation, and ongoing missionary training.

- Church Planting Support: \$8,550,000, or 15%. This amount includes rental of facilities, materials, and promotional expenses.

- Evangelism Support: \$5,700,000, or 10%. This amount includes Scripture distribution, sports evangelism, special evangelism events, and media campaigns.

Do we take seriously the words of our Lord and Savior when he asked us to go forth and witness to a lost world (Matthew 28:18-20)? We can begin doing that by praying for, getting personally involved in, and financially supporting Southern Baptists' North American mission effort.

Time may well be short. We should start right away. If we don't have our own house in order, how can we convince a lost world to get their houses in order? Think about it.

ships established through the Louisiana Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board's Adopt-A-Church program.

Adopt-A-Church linked Gulf Shore congregations with as many as six other congregations in North America for pastoral support, mission teams, and grants. (Editor's note: A similar program exists through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.)

Times remain tough in New Orleans and along the Gulf Shore. However, the Cajuns have learned that if you want to get something done, you should call the Baptists.

Thousands of volunteers are still needed in Mississippi and around the Gulf Coast region. A special telephone number and e-mail address have been established for Mississippi Baptists interested in volunteering during the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. The telephone hotline number is (601) 292-3206. The e-mail address is mbcbdisaster-relief@mbcb.org. If offering assistance via e-mail, please include your full name and a return telephone number.

Yeats is director of the communications team for the Louisiana Baptist Convention and is the recording secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

## GUEST OPINION:



### *Next time, call the Baptists*

By John L. Yeats  
Alexandria, La.

of toxic chemicals from the Murphy Oil Refinery.

A class-action lawsuit is pending on the liabilities related to property loss.

Some people have a mistaken idea about the devastation that remains in the New Orleans area. Despite the fact the New Orleans Saints made the National Football League playoffs in January and Mardi Gras was in full swing last month, New Orleans remains a broken city with a major portion of its population still dispersed across the continent.

There are hundreds of homes still in need of cleaning and repair. There are thousands of lives still carrying a load of despair and hopelessness.

Southern Baptists know they are to demonstrate the love of Christ for people. Their presence is making a profound difference.

Although one of Southern Baptists' six seminaries is located in New Orleans, previously the community never gave Southern Baptists a second thought. Because of the acts of kindness demonstrated through Southern Baptist volunteers, we have gained the attention of the community as people who get things done, who genuinely care and who want to offer hope to anyone experiencing the backwaters of lost dreams and lost hope.

While the volunteers are rebuilding structures and sharing hope with individuals, they also are having an impact on the local churches. The Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans released information in January that 31 of its congregations have ceased to exist. The ones that remain are struggling to sustain ministries. Many are doing so because of relation-

# Appalachia son leading residents to Christ

It's another early morning for Bill Barker in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. He leaves home earlier than usual in his brown Toyota minivan, which suddenly tops a mountain crest. He pulls off the road to talk to God.

"I look out across the mountains as the morning mist and fog begin to lift," he says. "You can still see the green valleys below filled with fog. It's such a beautiful sight. I stand there and pray, 'Lord, please send revival and fill these mountains again with Your glory even as You fill these valleys with the morning mist.'"

Born in Boone County, W. Va., Barker, a North American Mission Board missionary, grew up in the state's rugged coal mining country but left in 1969 with plans to never return. It was a Higher Calling — God Himself — who told Barker seven years ago that he should "go home" to West Virginia after a 32-year absence.

As a native Appalachian, Barker believes he is uniquely qualified for his current post, director of Appalachian Regional Ministry (ARM). ARM is a partnership ministry of the North American Mission Board, the Woman's Missionary Union, and 11 state conventions.

"I'm uniquely qualified for this work because not only am I a native of Appalachia, but over these past 32 years, God has been preparing me to come back and minister in West Virginia — first as a bi-vocational pastor working out in the secular market as a marketing rep for the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, in management for a grocery firm and later in the insurance business," he says. "Through all this, God was preparing me for what I'm doing today."

As head of Appalachian Regional Ministry based in Hurricane, W. Va., he directs a Southern Baptist organization that responds to the physical and spiritual needs of the people of Appalachia. ARM's main role is to share Christ with Barker's people — the people of Appalachia.

Barker is one of more than 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for North American Missions. He's one of eight Southern Baptist missionaries highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer, March 4-11, 2007.

The 2007 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$57 million, 100% of which is used for missionaries like Barker.

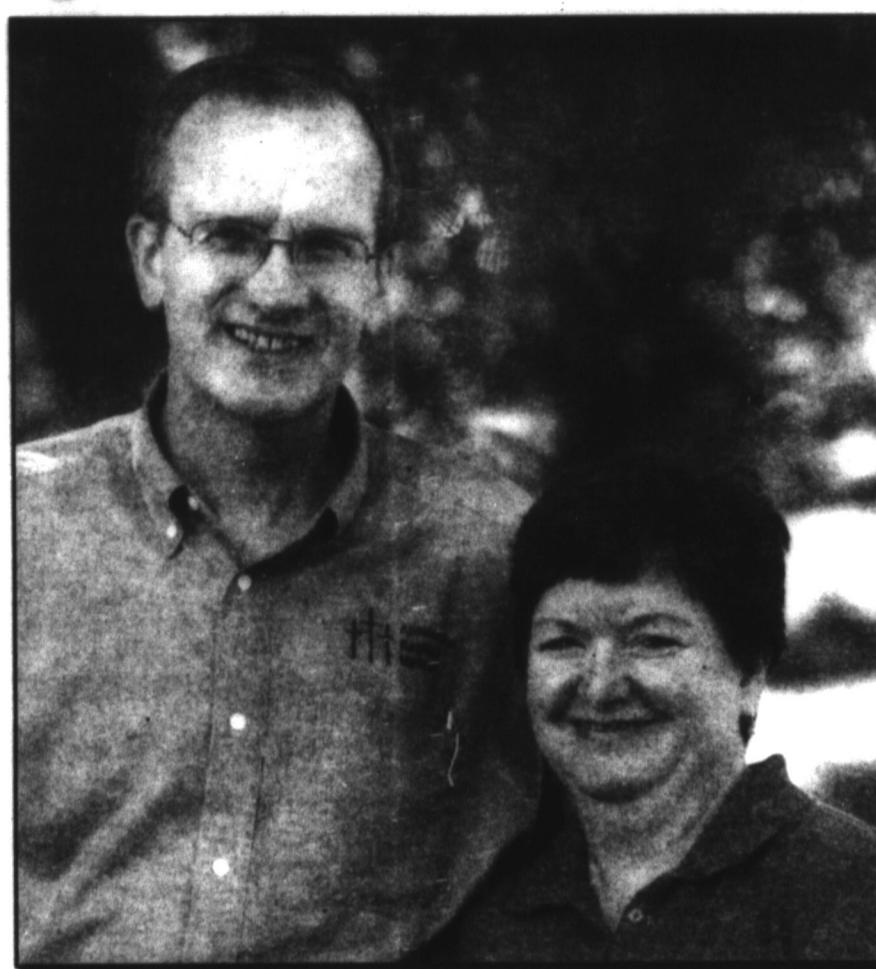
What does the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering mean to Bill Barker and Appalachian Regional Ministry?

"The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is one of the most effective ways of being able to reach out and touch lives," says Bill. "Because Southern Baptists give and because they care, I don't have to spend my time out trying to raise money. Instead, the Annie Armstrong offering gives me a way to devote myself 100% to the ministry..."

Appalachia is a very diverse region of the United States, Barker said.

"Our people here are very good people," Barker said. "They're quiet, loving, and kind people. Religion is still a big part of their lives. It's mountain religion. They love to sing and they love to make music. They are a very artistic people. They love to draw, carve and create with their hands."

At the same time, Barker believes Appalachian church-



APPALACHIA MINISTRY — Bill Barker (left) and his wife Arlene serve as North American Mission Board missionaries in Hurricane, W. Va., the headquarters for Barker's Appalachian Regional Ministry, which is also supported by the Woman's Missionary Union and 11 state Baptist conventions. ((NAMB photo by John K. Swain)

es — the ones still open — can be overly legalistic, and emphasize a "saved-by-works" religion instead of salvation by God's grace. He said locals tend to believe that people are saved by what they do or don't do, by dressing a certain way, or by using a certain Bible translation.

"As Southern Baptists, we have a wonderful opportunity to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the mountains of Appalachia and tell them God loves them, Christ died for them, and they're saved by grace through faith, not by works, lest any man should boast," Barker said, paraphrasing the apostle Paul.

Working to share Jesus in Appalachia means ministering to millions of people without Christ and to the poorest of America's poor. "Within

Appalachia, we have 37 of the 100 poorest counties in America," Barker said. "Twenty-nine of those counties exist in Eastern Kentucky, where 38% of adults lack either a high school diploma or a GED equivalent."

Calling the lostness of Appalachia "overwhelming," Barker said, "Within the 10-state region I cover, there are 13 million-plus unchurched men, women, boys, and girls." Although Appalachia has churches around every bend in every little mountain hamlet, overall church attendance is down, he says. Many churches have closed.

"Seventy percent of the Appalachian Mountain people are unchurched. In West Virginia, there's one Southern Baptist church for every 7,200 unchurched persons," he said.

## Looking back

10 years ago

Kurt W. Metzner of Milwaukee, Wis., is named president and chief executive officer of Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, Inc., the newly created parent company for Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson and numerous other healthcare services affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

20 years ago

Thirteen days after a tornado wipes out a portion of Jones County, a woman asks Jones Association Director of Missions Maurice Flowers for help. Flowers told a group of pastors her home can be repaired, but the emotional trauma will need to be dealt with for months to come.

50 years ago

First Church, Belzoni, is the first Southern Baptist church to order 1957 Christian Education Emphasis materials from the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.



MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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## Week of Prayer for NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

March 4-11, 2007

### Change Your World

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FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

**National Goal: \$57,000,000**

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BULL RIDING AND  
A BAPTIST CHURCH



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RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer  
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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.  
(I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my  
sins and freedom from eternal  
death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose  
from the grave to forgive my  
sins and to restore my  
relationship with you.  
(I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus  
Christ into my life. From this  
time on, I want to live in a loving  
relationship with Him. (I  
receive Christ as my Savior  
and Lord.)

"But as many as received him,  
to them he gave the right to become  
children of God, even to those who  
believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for  
Jesus Christ today, contact a  
local Baptist church for spiritual  
guidance.

Recently, a friend of mine and I were talking about churches, the pastorate, and the fragile and sometimes tenuous nature of the relationship. The friend I was visiting is the executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, Joe Bunce. Joe was a longtime pastor before becoming the executive director. In his early years, he was a bull rider. I suppose they were his wild and woolly, throw-caution-to-the-wind kind of days. While I personally have never ridden a bull, I have been to enough rodeos to tell you emphatically and unalterably I do not desire and never plan to be a bull rider. A couple of hundred pounds of man getting on the back of a couple of thousand pounds of snorting, kicking, and twisting bull is not my idea of fun or cultural enrichment. On the other hand, I, like most folks who have been to a rodeo, enjoy seeing the bull riders more than anything else that takes place. Regardless of whether the fellow stays on the back of the bull two seconds or the full eight-second ride, it is a pretty amazing thing to watch. I can understand why if you rode bulls for a little while you might hear the call to preach or at least do something else. I can also understand how bull riding might even prepare you for ministry.

My friend Joe Bunce informed me of a great truth about bull riding that has significance in a lot of areas of life. He told me that the most dangerous part of bull riding is getting on and getting off. According to him, it is important to get on gently and get off quickly. While I do not have any plans to exercise his advice, just from observation he was telling the truth.



# Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Let me return to the discussion we were having about pastors, churches, and how at times the relationship gets twisted around to where it reminded Joe Bunce of his bull riding days. Occasionally, you will see a pastor who seems to be riding his church, hanging on with spurs glistening and hat flying much like the bull rider. At times you will see a church bucking, snorting, and kicking — determined to go one way and then another not in coordination with the rider. That is not the image the New Testament projects, and it is not the way we are to do Kingdom business. Still, there may be some truths from this rodeo image that prove to be helpful in the church/pastor relationship.

*It is important that when a man comes to be pastor of a church that he get on gently.* Wisdom will dictate that you need to know and understand as best you can the nature and composition of the organism of which you become a part. With every church, there is a unique background and history. Within the structure, there are relationships about which you have no knowledge without listening, seeing, and learning. None of those things is available to the new pastor simply because he has been called and he has agreed to come. Like it or not, what has taken place before the

pastor arrives on the scene will have a lot to do with the success or failure that may take place.

Years ago, a fellow pastor came to the church near where I was serving. On his first Sunday, he outlined his program for the first five years. It was a bold plan and a Biblical plan, but it was somewhat detached from the local congregation and its resources. It totally ignored where they had been and what the present heart needs were in the congregation. Almost from the outset, the pastor lived in frustration because his plan was not accepted and his pastoral leadership was not appreciated. The five-year plan was condensed to about two years at which time he went to serve another church.

It is easy to get on an angry bull and make him even madder. So get on gently before the gate is opened.

*The second truth about bull riding is to get off quickly.* If you ride the bull for two seconds or the full eight seconds, when it comes time to get off you need to get off and get out of the way in a hurry. Being the pastor of a church is a God thing. When a church expresses its desire that you come and serve in that position it is a wonderful thing, but at the conclusion of that relationship for whatever reason, step aside and let the church and the new leader find God's guidance and

move on. If you do not get off quickly you can get kicked, stomped, butted, or all of the above in just a matter of seconds. It does not mean that you cannot go on loving the folks, having wonderful memories of the ride, and caring about that part of the work of God deeply. However, it is best to get out of the way of the bull's business. Jesus was Lord of the church long before you ever went there, and He will continue to exercise His Lordship long after you are gone. Therefore, when He says get off, let go in haste.

Let me point out one other thing that I have seen about bull riding that is important to keep in mind. It can get a little tedious while you are riding the bull. You may get on gently and get off quickly, but that time in between can be bumpy.

*If you are going to stay on you have to have determination, strength, focus, and flexibility, or the job will never be done.* The folks who ride bulls are gritty guys. They hold on tight, stay with the stuff, and go with the flow. I have observed with bull riding, as with most other sporting events, that the people who seem to know the most about what ought to be done and how it ought to be done are sitting up in the stands. That is just the way it is. The people who ultimately get the job done get on gently, hold on tightly, do what needs to be done at the moment, and get off quickly when the ride is over.

When it is done right and the experience is over, everybody involved is a winner — and for sure, that is what our Lord would desire for us in His Kingdom work.

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# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 8, 2007

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

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Last Crusader Day  
2007

Central Hills Baptist Retreat  
Ministry

Mississippi Missionary Parents Fellowship  
Mississippi Missionaries Fellowship

## MMPF & MMF SPRING FELLOWSHIPS

Friday and Saturday, April 20-21  
FBC, Madison

(To take place during the Annual Missions Celebration, April 20-21)

All missionaries & missionary parents are invited to the Friday night  
MISSIONS BANQUET at 5:00 p.m.  
FBC, Madison, Fellowship Hall  
"MEET & GREET" at 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.

FLAG PROCESSIONAL INTO WORSHIP at 8:00 p.m.

## MMPF SPRING FELLOWSHIP

Friday, April 20  
2:15 - 4:45 p.m.

FBC, Madison, Conference Room  
WHO? All parents (and relatives) of former and currently  
active missionaries, home and international (foreign),  
including Journeymen, ISCCers, MKs, etc.  
COST: No Cost for Fellowship



## MMF FELLOWSHIP & BUSINESS SESSIONS

Saturday, April 21

9:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.  
FBC, Madison, Conference Room

WHO? All former and currently active missionaries, home and international (foreign),  
including Journeymen, ISCCers, Mission Service Corp Volunteers and Adult MKs.  
COST: No Cost for Fellowship

Contact Kathy Burns, MS wMu, for info & registration forms: [kburns@mbcb.org](mailto:kburns@mbcb.org),  
1-800-292-3324 or 1-800-748-1651. PLEASE REGISTER BY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4.

## SINGLE LIFE CONFERENCE

Tuesday  
March 20  
FBC  
Kosciusko

(No cost)

Discipleship & Family Ministry  
Department

PICKING UP THE PIECES  
Miss Chocolate, Gwen Williams  
renowned speaker and author, Picayune

SINGLE PARENTING  
Dot Day  
Family Counselor, Crystal Springs  
6:30 p.m.  
Supper: Finger Food

For info: 662-289-5575

**W.F. UNITED**  
OH SEVEN.

JULY 7-11, 2007  
MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STUDENTS  
UNITE WITH ONE VOICE AND PASSION.

PREPARE. WORSHIP. GO.

Discipleship & Family Ministry  
Department

REGISTRATION BEGINS  
MARCH 1

**"It's Your Call!"**

Worship Leader  
Karen Fisk  
Music Evangelist

Key Note Speaker  
Drew Phillips  
President, Illinois wMu

Featuring  
Drew Phillips  
East St. Louis Ministry Center

Annual Missions Celebration  
5 wMu Associational Missions  
Leadership Training

For more info, contact Mississippi wMu at  
601-292-3319 or spruitt@mbcb.org.  
Go to [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org). Click on: Departments, Mission Strategy,  
Woman's Missionary Union.

**Church Facilities & Furnishings**

WORKSHOP

Church Facilities & Furnishings  
Workshop

Workshop

2007

MONDAY, APRIL 23

HARRISBURG

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

GRENADA

FEATURED  
PRESENTER  
O.S. Hawkins

**PREACHING**  
CONFERENCE

**Strategic  
Mega  
Focus  
Cities**

BALTIMORE  
CLEVELAND  
NEW YORK  
VANCOUVER

The most dramatic shift in American life this century is urbanization. By 2020, the top 20 cities in the U.S. will grow by 30-50%.

**Mississippi Baptist churches are networking to begin a "high impact" church in each of four strategic mega focus cities.**

**You Can Provide**

- **Focused Prayer Support**
- **Volunteer Support**
- **Financial Support**
- **Advocacy Support**

**Contact: Information**  
Ken Rhodes, 601-292-3398, [krhodes@mbcb.org](mailto:krhodes@mbcb.org)  
Paul Harrell, 601-292-3398, [pharrell@mbcb.org](mailto:pharrell@mbcb.org)

**WHY?**

**Mississippi Baptist Churches**  
will be involved in starting a "high impact" church in each area. These churches are designed to plant a new church every two to three years. Then the new church plant will do the same. Multiplication of churches will continue to impact these mega focus cities.

Missions  
Mobilization  
Department

March 29-31, 2007

**Ministry from the Heart  
WHY AND HOW?**

**CHURCH  
LIBRARY  
MINISTRY  
RETREAT**

**Camp Ganayma**  
Clinton

**Conference Speaker**  
Janie Walters  
Madison,  
Miss.

Entertaining! Informative!  
Motivational! Inspiration!  
Janie is a leader with humorous  
presentations that challenge  
people to strive for the best life  
has to offer; and, encourages  
those same people to offer their  
best back to life.

**"The Garbage Truck Comes on Tuesday and Friday" ...  
or ... "Neutralizing Negatives"**

The topic of this year's conference!

The poet has said that "into every life a little rain must fall." While the statement is true, the wisdom ignores the fact that we don't have to get wet. Using well-documented research, audience participation, and lots of humor, this presentation highlights practical "umbrellas" for neutralizing the negative experiences and feelings that pour into every life. Down-to-earth and funny, the content is guaranteed to equip participants with the buoys needed to stabilize joy in all situations.

**AUTOMATION  
LED BY SANDRA FITTS**  
Get a quick start on automation by setting up the system to fit your needs.

**BASIC ADMINISTRATION  
LED BY SUE BERTHELOT**  
Gain a basic understanding of what actions are involved when administering a church library ministry such as planning, budgeting and operation.

**BASIC SEARS AND DEWEY  
LED BY SANDRA FITTS**  
Explore how to find the key word one time and apply to both classification and subject heading.

**CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH LIBRARY  
LED BY SUE BERTHELOT**  
Join us as we investigate various types of books and other media that will introduce children and preschoolers to the concept of God, from the earliest ages, and fun ways to encourage them to seek Jesus as they begin their journey toward salvation.

**PRESERVING MEMORIES  
LED BY BRYNDA PENDERGRAST**  
Learn the techniques and materials to preserve a memory or your church history.

**TEAM DEVELOPMENT  
LED BY SUE BERTHELOT**  
This conference will help you discover ways of nurturing the personal growth of team members and develop a plan for recruiting and enlisting.

**TOOLS FOR MINISTRY  
LED BY SANDRA FITTS**  
Discuss how CLM resources may be used to build a library ministry, to organize resources, and to train workers so that we can meet the needs of our church family and those to whom they witness.

For more info and registration form, contact Judy Chen, Communication Services, 1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3378, or [jchen@mbcb.org](mailto:jchen@mbcb.org), or get form online at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org)

# Sync Up

The Power  
of Working Together



Bill Taylor  
President  
Bill Taylor &  
Associates

Brent Taylor  
Senior Pastor  
FBC, Carrollton, TX

Sunday School Department 1000 Boy Scout Pkwy, MS 38601  
www.mbc.org/sunday-school-local-day@mbcb.org

Sync Up will provide you the opportunity to build upon the foundation that you have with those who share a common mission. **Bill Taylor**, with his extensive background in building ministry teams in local churches and at the denominational level, and **Brent Taylor**, a God-called pastor and shepherd of the local church congregation, have worked together to develop a conference to help both the Pastor and his minister of education of larger churches and the pastor and his Sunday School director of smaller churches.

### The power of working together will help the team:

- Dialogue and plan for the most productive ministry possible.
- Understand the role of the pastor.
- Clarify a God-given vision.
- Understand the role of the minister of education and Sunday School director.
- Know what the pastor needs from his Education staff.
- Know what the education staff needs from their pastor.
- Work together to build God's kingdom.

### These TWO conferences are designed for:

- **The Pastor and his Minister of Education**  
9 a.m.-2 p.m., \$15 per person  
*Larger church emphasis*
- **The Pastor and his Sunday School Director**  
6 p.m.-9 p.m., \$10 per person  
*Smaller church emphasis*

**Must Preregister:  
Registration forms  
at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org)**

## VBS Church Leadership Trainings for '07

**WE'VE HEARD  
YOUR PLEAS  
AND WE'VE  
ANSWERED.**

For the first time ever, we have planned VBS Church Leadership Trainings for YOUR church and surrounding areas. We encourage you to send your Church VBS Leadership to be a part of this exciting event. We guarantee a FUN time of fellowship.

### Conferences offered

#### Clinic – Game Day Central

- Younger Preschool Conference
- Older Preschool Conference
- Younger Children's Conference
- Middle Children's Conference
- Older Children's Conference
- Youth Conference – NEW
- Adult Conference – NEW
- Pastor/Evangelism Conference
- General Officer Conference
- Children's Rotation: Missions, Music, Crafts, Snacks

#### Club VBS – Jungle Jaunt

Contact Angie Boydstun, Preschool/Children's Consultant with the Sunday School Dept., at 601.292.3294 or 1.800.748.1651, ext. 294, or by E-mail at [aboydstun@mbcb.org](mailto:aboydstun@mbcb.org).

**ALL CONFERENCES**  
6:30 p.m. worship rally  
7-9 p.m. conference

<b>April 23</b>	<b>North Oxford</b> Oxford FBC, Louisville FBC, Natchez
<b>April 24</b>	<b>FBC, Tupelo</b> FBC, Yazoo City FBC, Purvis
<b>April 26</b>	<b>North Greenwood</b> Greenwood
<b>April 30</b>	<b>FBC, Meridian</b>



# VISION '07

## INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS EMPHASIS

*You are invited to join us for a unique and exciting event about global missions with Gordon Fort, IMB, and Terry Sharp, IMB.*

*3 convenient locations:*

**Monday, April 30, 2007**  
FBC, Starkville

**Tuesday, May 1, 2007**  
FBC, Richland

**Wednesday, May 2, 2007**  
Easthaven Baptist Church, Brookhaven

*Day Event, 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.*

*Ministers of Missions Dinner, 5 p.m.*

*Evening Rally, 6 p.m.*

## VISION GLOBAL IMPACT

# 2007 Extreme Student

**"LIVING TO THE EXTREME!"**

**CAMP EDITION – GRADES 7-12**  
Hinds Community College Raymond, Mississippi

**DATES, PASTORS & WORSHIP LEADERS**

Jon Daniels, Will Reedy	June 4-8
Gary Permenter, Will Reedy	June 11-15
Clay Stegall, Kevin Williams	June 15-19
Ken Hester, Kevin Williams	June 19-23
Kevin Cooper, Tom Edwards	June 23-27

**FOR MORE SUMMER YOUTH CAMPS PROGRAM INFORMATION:**  
**Huey Dedmon**, Student Ministry Specialist  
1-800-748-1651, ext. 320, (601) 292-3320, [hdedmon@mbcb.org](mailto:hdedmon@mbcb.org)

*Pray this day for...*

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*"Science doesn't refute God. It affirms him, and gives us new respect for the beauty of creation."*

*Francis Collins in December 2006 GUIDEPOSTS*

Mike Purple of Fairbanks, Alaska, is a campus evangelist at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Please pray for continuing leadership development as well as for a church for students that Mike is planting.

God has raised up an exceptional servant, D., in eastern Venezuela. There are no other believers in her family, yet D remains faithfully obedient to the Lord and to His call and is directing her church's church planting efforts. Currently five new congregations are in formation. D needs your prayers as she fulfills God's call on her life.

(1) Substance Abuse Prevention (CAC Emphasis); (2) Missionary Alan Duncan and the Eastern Cape Urban Team of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, ask for prayer for AG and GP, two young men robbed at gun point several weeks ago. Both men are former players that Alan coached in basketball and, praise God, are believers. Pray that they will seek God's will for their lives.

(1) Transitional Pastor Training, 19th - 22nd (CMR); (2) Nearly 8,000 Chinese babies were adopted by U.S. citizens in 2005, however, China is tightening its adoption law May 1 to favor middle-aged couples with good health and no outstanding health concerns. Pray that China will not deny any of its orphaned children the possibility of joining a loving family.

The B. family has just finished their first year among the Turks of Bulgaria. They write, "God has taught us SO much this past year, yet we have much further to go. Language learning, like sanctification, is lifelong. Pray that we can make effective use of our time to learn the language and have wisdom in what to study and how to study!"

(1) Church Facilities & Furnishings Workshop, Temple BC, Harrisburg (P/LD); (2) The year 2007 will be a critical year for Pakistan as the presidential elections will be held in the fall. Please pray throughout the year for the current president, Pervez Musharraf, and his family. Pray for those under his leadership. Petition for peaceful elections.

(1) Campers on Mission: Freewill BC, Waynesboro, 14th - 18th; (2) Give thanks that the International Prayer Center of Jerusalem is privileged to assist like minded ministry in their outreach to the community. Thank you for praying!

Muslim background believers in one country are encouraged to share their decision to follow Christ with their wives. Praise God for one man who has his wife was very angry to learn he was a believer in Jesus. Undaunted, he said, "Just listen. It is not me telling you. This is what it says in the Quran." Pray for this man's wife to see the truth of Scripture as he did.

Last year, several new churches were started among Arabs in Algeria between April and December. Pray that the number of churches will more than double before December 2007. In addition to the increase in churches, some new groups were formed in 2006. These small groups are meeting for prayer and Bible study and desire to become churches soon.

Don Keir, Silver City, N. Mex., serves as pastor of two mission works: Tyrone Community Fellowship and Basso Mountain Church (RV Park). Pray that attendance will grow, believers will follow the Lord in baptism, and that replacements will be provided when they retire.

International Service Corps workers Jim and Sherry Neal request prayer for Bible study groups in Villa Maria and Pachacatec, Peru. Pray especially for men to join these groups. They are really beginning to read and believe the Bible. Pray for those who are very close to receiving Christ as their Savior.

(1) Hispanic Women's Retreat, Camp Garaywa, 16th - 17th; (2) Dave Wedekind of Green Bay, Wis., is mission pastor/corporate chaplain at a meat packing company and disaster relief director for Minnesota. Pray for God for supplying this job to reach people in the workplace. Pray for a disaster relief coordinator in each of the eight associations.

Missionaries Sam and Delores York in Haiti plan to go on state side assignment in June. It seems impossible for them to get all the loose ends tied up in time. Pray for churches to act as one body. They want to leave feeling that the leaders will continue what has been started and help grow new Christians and new churches.

Mowana village, of Botswana and Zimbabwe, heard a story about Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch and they are planning their own baptism sometime in the near future. Give thanks to the Father that eight people have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior!



**Tuesday, March 13**  
Temple BC, Hattiesburg  
(601) 736-2254

**Tuesday, March 20**  
FBC, Cleveland  
(662) 226-5316

**Thursday, March 22**  
Colonial Heights BC, Ridgeland  
(601) 956-5000

**Monday, March 26**  
West Jackson Street BC  
Tupelo  
(662) 256-8778

**Tuesday, April 3**  
Northcrest BC, Meridian  
Buddy McElroy (Area Rep)  
(601) 681-6615

**Thursday, April 19**  
FBC, Brookhaven  
(601) 833-8111

Discipleship and Family Ministry Department  
601-292-3373 or 1-800-748-1651 or gshows@mbcb.org

## Senior Adult Spring Rallies

More info  
to follow



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Parents: Jerry & Kelly  
Last Frontier

**5-14-90**  
**MISS KELSEY HORTON**  
Parents: Francis & Angie  
Baptist Global Response

**5-15-96**  
**MR. PATRICK AUSTIN**  
Parents: Arnold & Susie  
South America

**5-16-91**  
**MR. KONNER HORTON**  
Parents: Francis & Angie  
Baptist Global Response

**5-16-96**  
**MR. MICAH J. PEACOCK**  
Parents: Kevin & Brenda  
Middle America & the Caribbean

**5-16-00**  
**MISS ADDIE GRACE PUTNAM**  
Parents: Tracy & Genie  
Central & Eastern Europe

**5-20-88**  
**MR. JOHN R. McCALL**  
Parents: Dennis & Margaret  
CESA

**5-24-91**  
**MISS LAURA M. PURL**  
Parents: John & Amy  
West Africa

**5-26-06**  
**MISS DARCY DOYLE**  
Parents: Dwayne & Melissa  
Central & Eastern Europe

**5-31-02**  
**MR. SAMUEL SIMPSON**  
Parents: Adam & Kristen  
Central & Eastern Europe

Due to security  
reasons full names  
or region of service  
may not be published.

Cards will be  
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*No magazines or  
periodicals can be  
forwarded.*

# NAMB workers: church planting tough in Seattle

SEATTLE, WASH. — Seattle can seem like one big paradox. On one hand, it is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Almost 574,000 people live in Seattle proper, and about four million in the metro area.

Seattle, also known as the Emerald City because of the lush evergreen trees in the area, has been called the most literate city in the United States. The most recent census found that Seattle has the highest percentage of college graduates of any major U.S. city. Men's Fitness magazine named Seattle the fittest city in the U.S. The area is home to Microsoft, Boeing, and Starbucks.

With some 190 different languages spoken, Seattle is a very multiethnic city. Many world religions are represented. It's a very spiritual city, and more than 80% of the residents say they believe in something beyond the physical realm.

At the same time, only about four percent of the four million people in greater Seattle are evangelical Christians.

"Seattle has never been a Christian city," says Gary Irby, church planting missionary for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the Puget Sound Association. "It's not post-Christian—it's never had a predominant Christian influence."



**NORTHWEST MINISTRY** — Based in Seattle, Wash., Gary (left) and Joyce Irby have served as church planting missionaries for the North American Mission Board and Puget Sound Association for nine years. (NAMB photo by Adam Buchanan)

Therein lies the rub for 46-year-old Irby, whose sole mission is to plant new churches to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Puget Sound area, which is about 100 miles long and 40 miles wide.

Irby comes from a long line of church planters. "My granddaddy was a bi-vocational church planter in north Texas. Then my dad went into the ministry at an early age, moved to Indiana and

Irby is only one of more than 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for North American Missions. He's one of eight Southern Baptist missionaries highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer, March 4-11.

The 2007 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$57 million, 100% of which is used for missionaries like Irby.

"One of the important things we've discovered is that you cannot presume that people in Seattle have a basic understanding of the Gospel," Irby said. "You can't assume they've ever been in church, that they've ever even seen or read the Bible. Many people around the country don't understand that there's a part of the United States like that."

planted eight churches there before I turned seven years old.

"Even with my background, it wasn't an absolute sure thing that I was going to be a minister, much less a church planter. I thought about music, education, and even politics before God led me into the ministry."

As a young minister in Washington state, Irby served a church that was growing but growing very slowly. He became frustrated with himself and with God. He said he prayed and did the things he needed to do to grow the church but it just wasn't happening.

Irby asked God, "Lord, what's going on here? What gives? God said to me very clearly — the clearest I've ever heard Him — 'Gary, you've been adding. It's time to start multiplying.' In other words, He meant that it was my turn to get involved in church planting."

During his 20 years as a church planter, nine of those years in Seattle, Irby has been answering God's call to multiply.

"About seven years ago, we had about 100 churches in the area," Irby said. "We've seen that number grow to about 170 different churches, in 20 different languages. Over half of the new churches we've started have been churches using a language other than English." These include Japanese,

Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Russian, and Spanish.

In addition to planting Seattle churches focusing on nationalities, Irby and the 65 church planters he's directed over the last nine years have also started churches by targeting groups based on age. They also have planted new churches in apartment complexes, theaters, and schools.

"My role as a church planting missionary is to help recruit and train church planters, to assess them, to help them find partners, and to help them discern where God is leading them to plant a church. A lot of planters come in and say 'just tell me where to plant a church.' I tell them I won't do that. I'll leave that to God. We'll show them a half-dozen possible places, and pray with them about where God is leading them.

"It's a constant struggle to find enough churches to come and help us with the new church plants. It takes prayer support, mission involvement, and financial giving, but as much as we need money, it's more than that. We want supporting churches that will commit to pray for us regularly and consistently, and churches that will send people to come and help us with short-term missions.

## Missionary working to plant non-traditional Texas churches

IRVING, TEXAS — "If there is anything being done in the world today, to change the world, it is planting churches."

So says Leroy Fountain, church planter associate for the North American Mission Board and the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention.

Fountain's mission field is as big and vast as the State of Texas — literally. It includes African-American, coffee-house, language, suburban, storefront, and college churches in Austin, Dallas, and Houston, and western heritage cowboy churches from east to west Texas over 770 miles apart.

How do Fountain and wife Carolyn serve and support such a variety of Texas churches, with different memberships, dynamics, histories, and cultures?

"Well, they are all different but there are, at the heart of every church, things that are the same," Fountain said. "We want them to be churches that concentrate on the basics of the development of a group of people who know Jesus Christ is Lord, and who are following Him as disciples."

Fountain is only one of more than 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for North American Missions. He's one of eight Southern Baptist missionaries



**COWBOY JOKE** — Leroy Fountain (right), a NAMB church planting missionary, shares a laugh with Richard Willingham (left) and Don Ricks, pastor of Shiloh Cowboy Church in Venus, Texas, before the start of worship services. (NAMB Photo by Caleb Simpson)

highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer, March 4-11.

The 2007 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$57 million, 100% of which is used for missionaries like Fountain.

"By planting new churches, we want to develop an evangelism program that will cause people to be missionaries in their own communities, reaching out and becoming transformation agents in those neighborhoods where they live," said Fountain. "Then they can begin to lead people to Christ, and

help the church become a beacon of light in neighborhoods where there is often darkness.

"We often think that all the darkness is in the urban inner-cities," said Fountain, "but there's so much darkness in our suburbs, in our young people and in our senior citizens. Even though the world is more crowded than ever, people are lonelier than ever. The church can be a refuge, an oasis, in the middle of this dark and desolate world."

How does Fountain respond to those who say the State of

Texas is 161 years old, located smack-dab in the middle of the Bible Belt, has plenty of churches already, and doesn't need any more?

"All you have to do is drive around the Dallas-Ft. Worth area to see all the homes being built," Fountain said. "There are a lot of communities in Texas — Collin County, for example — that are among the fastest-growing areas in the U.S. If everybody in these new neighborhoods were to show up for church Sunday morning, there wouldn't be enough seats. So we need new churches."

Fountain's role in this process is to first identify, assess, and train church planters. Next, he works with the local Southern Baptist association offices in Texas to identify sponsoring churches, and works with the pastors and congregations in sponsoring churches to help them see the value of starting a new church.

Fountain is quick to say he's not trying to plant the same kind of churches Southern Baptists have started in the past. The churches Fountain and other Southern Baptist church planters are starting today take on new forms. Not only are they "niche" churches, some churches are designed even to be non-lasting or temporary churches.

"We need new churches that stretch us — churches that look

like the new generation. Many of the new-style churches are actually more demanding, more discipleship-oriented, and have stricter accountability than traditional churches."

Young people, he said, are looking for a church that presents the Gospel in a package they can readily understand. "We want to instill a missionary mindset in the hearts and minds of young people in Texas that if and when they move to another state or city, they don't have to look for a church, they can start a new one."

Fountain said the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is important in a couple of ways. "It is the primary funding agent for our North American missionaries. It also allows me and other missionaries to concentrate and focus on the work rather than on worrying about how we're going to take care of the daily necessities of our families."

Fountain believes that "this is what I was shaped to do — it's what I am gifted to do. It's the place where I'm most comfortable in ministry. I don't want to be a pastor or a preacher. This gives me an opportunity to invest my life with a group of people in one community, and then move on to do the same in another community. Church planting has brought a joy to my life. It's something I still get a thrill in doing."

**Bibliocipher**By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004  
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XIZ BSU UIPV DBTU  
FPXO, P NZ TPVM? BOF  
XIZ BSU UIPV FJTRVJAUAF  
XJUIJO NA? IPQA JO HPF:  
GPS J TIBMM ZAU QSBITA  
IJN, XIP JT UIA IABMUI  
PG NZ DPVOUAOBODA,  
BOF NZ HPF.

QTBMNT GPSUZ-  
UISAA:GJWA

Clue: F = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Proverbs Ten: Thirteen.

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**4. Young Authors Celebration, WCU**

1. Two Mississippi College chemistry students brought home two of the three awards given at the 27th Annual University of Memphis Undergraduate Chemistry Research Conference held on the University of Memphis campus February 24. James Liskin was presented the top award in the Organic and Biochemistry Division and Amika Sood tied for first place in the Analytical, Inorganic, and Physical Chemistry Division.
2. Blue Mountain College, is one of only eight colleges and universities in the United States being honored with the "Courts Redford Award for Excellence in Student Missionary Deployment" by the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB). Blue Mountain is being recognized for its "strong commitment of excellence" in deploying student missionaries during 2006.

3. Maggi Payne, retired School of Nursing faculty at **William Carey University**, was recently elected president-elect of the National Organization of Baptist Nursing Fellowship. The organization focuses on missions with emphasis on service, education and fellowship.

4. **William Carey University** Young Authors Celebration co-chairs Barry Morris and June Hornsby pose with Winnie the Pooh during the second annual Young Authors Celebration held recently on the Hattiesburg campus. Approximately 355 2nd through 8th graders from 15 schools visited the campus for a day of events including presentations by published authors and illustrators.

5. Miss **William Carey University** Third Alternate Chineme Enyiuoha of Nigeria; Second Alternate Elsie Burton of Ellisville; Miss WCU 2007 Elizabeth Goff of Moss Point; Third Alternate Amy Maddox of Magee; and Fourth Alternate Suzanne Adcock of Crestview, Fla., are pictured here following the Miss WCU Pageant held Feb. 24 on the Hattiesburg campus.

**5. Miss WCU Pageant****REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS**

**Bethel Church, Bogue Chitto: Revival, Mar. 11-14; Sun., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Brad Moak, speaker; Ed May, music; Jeff Davis, pastor.**

**Bethesda Church, Terry: Youth Revival, Mar. 9-14; 6 p.m.; Chad Douglas, speaker; churchwide revival, Mar. 11-14; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gene Douglas, speaker; Robby Britt, pastor.**

**Calvary Church, New Augusta: Turner Memorial Day service, Mar. 11, beginning at 9:45 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch.**

**First Church, Sand Hill: One-day revival, Mar. 18; worship, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Andy Bryan, speaker and music; John Montalvo, pastor.**

**Holly Springs Church, Brookhaven: Homecoming, Mar. 18; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; business meeting, 10:05 a.m., followed by worship and covered dish lunch; John Smith, speaker; Harmony Trio, music.**

**LeMoyne Boulevard Church, Biloxi: Revival/Magnificent Mondays; Mar. 5, 12, 19, and 26, 6:30 p.m.; Ben Carlisle, Byron Howell, and Ricky White, speakers; Southern Psalm, music (Mar. 5).**

**Trinity Church, Laurel: 50th anniversary, Mar. 25; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish meal and afternoon music; Harrison Weger, speaker.**

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# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Jesus Opens Our Eyes

John 9:8-10,20-22,24-25,30-33,35-39

By Angie Boydston

I discovered at the early age of six that I could not see. My sight was so bad that even on the front row of class I couldn't see the words on the board. However, until my nearsightedness was diagnosed, I didn't know that I had a problem. I guess I thought everyone went through life with a fuzzy view. When I got my first pair of glasses, I remember being fascinated at how clear images became and amazed that I could actually see the words on billboards and road signs.

Many people today are spiritually nearsighted and do not realize it. They think they can see things just fine – but like some of the religious leaders of Jesus' day, their vision is distorted. Not until these people

are confronted by Jesus do they realize they need to have their sight restored. Once Jesus opens their eyes, however, they see things clearly that they were not about to see before.

In John 9, Jesus healed a man who had been blind since birth. As they went along, Jesus and his disciples saw this man sitting by the road. The disciples wondered who had sinned to cause this deformity, but Jesus quickly put their misguided idea to rest, telling them that neither the man nor his parents had caused his condition through sin. Jesus then made some clay using his saliva and some dirt. After applying this to the man's eyes, Jesus told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Once the man did so, he came home able to see!



Boydston

This man was so dramatically changed that those around him weren't sure he was the same person they had known. He had to tell them in verse 9 that he was "the one." Even though this story concerns the physical healing of a man's eyesight, the account is clearly meant to indicate that Jesus opens people's eyes spiritually and thereby changes their lives forever.

When a dramatic spiritual transformation takes place in someone's life, people wonder what might have happened. What an incredible opportunity this becomes to tell what Jesus has done in his or her life. In verses 20-22, the man's parents are asked how their son was made to see. They feared what might happen to them if they answered given that they could have been put out of the synagogue if they acknowledged that Jesus was the reason for the healing. So they suggested that

the question be put to their son.

The formerly blind man himself was not at all afraid to admit what he thought about Jesus. When the religious leaders implored him to "Give glory to God," they were giving the man a solemn charge to tell the truth. He admitted that he didn't know a lot about Jesus. But he knew Jesus healed him and therefore must be from God. His reasoning was that God would not listen to sinners and that Jesus could not have restored his sight if He were a sinner.

When Jesus transforms a life, no argument can convince that person that the experience wasn't valid. People who have had life-changing transformations through the power of Jesus do not have to be able to answer all the questions put to them. They don't have to know theology or how to argue with cynics. They simply need to tell what Jesus has done for them.

An experience with God that is real will always lead to a simple confession such as this man

made in verse 38 — "Lord, I believe." When Jesus heard what had happened to this man, He sought him out in order to lead him to an understanding of his confession. He merely asked the man if he believed in the Son of Man. The man responded with his confession and worshipped Jesus.

Jesus said that He came to give sight to those who did not see and to show others who thought they could see just how blind they were. Just as He healed the man's physical blindness, He sought to heal his spiritual blindness. Often those who haven't had a life-altering experience with Jesus are blind to the true spiritual significance of who Jesus is and what He does. Unlike the religious leaders who thought they had it all figured out, this man was willing to listen to Jesus and take the simple step of faith.

Boydston is Preschool and Children's consultant in the Sunday School Dept., MBCB, and a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Accept a Challenging Standard

1 Peter 1:13-25

By Ivan Parke

Character determines conduct. Behavior that we sometimes excuse as "out of character" actually is our character. Jesus stated, "For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Mt. 12:34b).

Salvation is a change of character (conversion). Therefore, the conduct of the saved should be different. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17; see also 1:14).

In the second half of the first chapter, Peter intertwines theology (doctrine of salvation) and ethics (principles that govern conduct). Commands did not appear in verses 1-12 (theology without ethics). In verses 13-25, however, four commands [acc. to the Greek text]

appear: "hope" (1:13), "be" (1:15), "conduct" (1:17), and "love" (1:22).

#### 1. THEOLOGY: We are saved by God's work.

Reviewing the truths about salvation, Peter highlighted "divine initiative" as the common thread. [a] GOD finalized the plan to save humanity before creating the heavens and earth, Adam and Eve (1:20). He did not need our input to devise our rescue. [b] GOD redeemed humanity with precious blood (1:18-19). No one could have afforded forgiveness because the world's currency — silver and gold — has no spiritual value. [c] GOD raised Jesus from the dead, the basis for our faith and hope (1:21). [d] GOD called us to be holy (1:15). His calling is always purposeful (see also 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10).

#### 2. ETHICS: We are saved for good works.



Parke

In Ephesians 2:8-9 (oft-quoted), the Apostle Paul stressed, "by grace ... through faith ... not as a result of works." The next verse (Eph. 2:10) completes the section (Eph. 2:1-10) but receives considerably less attention: "For we are His workmanship, created

in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." "Works," for the evangelical Christian, is a bad word, designating the archenemy of grace.

James wrote, "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:17, 26). The Lord's brother rightly expected "works" to follow conversion; so did Peter.

#### [a] Command: "Having Girded, Being Sober, Hope Fully"

In verse 13, the main verb is "hope." Peter urged his readers to transcend their trying circumstances.

Two participles, "gird" and "be sober," modify "hope." "Girding" always preceded working. To gird oneself increased mobility. First-century

folk would tuck their robe under a belt or girdle. We roll up our sleeves. "Being sober" enabled vigilance, a necessary posture during adversity (4:7; 5:8; see also 1 Th. 5:6, 8; 2 Tim. 4:5).

#### [b] Command: "Be Holy"

In verse 15, the main verb "be" binds together verses 14-16. Peter challenged his readers to forsake their sinful past (1:14; see also 1:18). Anticipating the "Why" question, he quoted Leviticus (11:44; 19:2; 20:7), a member of the Torah whose theme is "Holiness." Three phrases define "holiness": "reserved for" (see Lev. 20:26), "different than" (see Lev. 18:3), and "pure from" (see Lev. 10:10; 11:42-45).

#### [c] Command: "Conduct"

In verse 17, the main verb "conduct" refers to activity that occurs publicly. Peter instructed his readers to fear God (i.e., revere; see also 2:17) as they interacted with others. He already exhorted them to be holy in all behavior (1:15; see also 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16). The Greek noun anastrephe ("behavior") and the Greek verb anastrepho ("to conduct") are related words, derivatives of strepho, a Greek verb.

#### [d] Command: "Love One Another"

In verse 22, the main verb "love" targets relationships within God's family. Peter demanded a constant, earnest love (see also 4:8). The Greek adverb, translated "fervently" or "deeply" (NIV), implies "straining." Years earlier, Peter had heard Jesus assert, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:35).

The New Testament writers consistently used "one another," "brother," and "brethren" to identify believers (5:9; see also Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1; 1 Jn. 3:10-17).

Living better is possible because God's eternal Word initiates conversion (1:23-25). To promote better living, Peter cited three motivations: [1] Return of Jesus (1:13), [2] God the Father as Impartial Judge (1:17), and [3] Costliness of Salvation (1:18-19).

Scriptures cited are from the New American Standard unless otherwise indicated.

Parke is Associate Professor, Dept. of Christian Studies and Philosophy, MC, and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs



The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted.

Photograph attachments are permissible. Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Cross Ceremony, Peach Creek Church, Panola Association

1. Peach Creek Church, Panola Association, held a cross placing ceremony Jan. 21, with fifty crosses representing approximately 50 million babies aborted since the enactment of *Roe v. Wade*. Bobby Caples, pastor.
2. First Church, Satartia, ordained Jimmy Wayne Pettis as deacon Jan. 28. Shown are Susan Pettis, pastor Bobby Anderson, and Pettis.
3. The youth, children, and leaders of Shiloh Church,



2. Deacon Ordination, First Church, Satartia



3. Mardi Gras Parade Float, Shiloh Church, Marion County



4. Singing Valentines, Clifton Church, Scott County



5. Acteens Worldcraft Party, Liberty Church, New Albany

Marion County, entered a float in the Columbia Mardi Gras parade Feb. 15. Outreach included beads, cups, and candy thrown to the crowd with scriptures attached. Roy Tidwell, pastor.

4. The children of the Wednesday evening Discovery Bible Club, Clifton Church, Scott County, delivered "singing valentines" to the homes of senior adults of the church Feb. 14. Shown are the participants. Tony Henry, pastor.

5. The Acteens of Liberty Church, New Albany, recently hosted a Worldcraft party, which counted as one of their Mission Quest steps to study other cultures. The girls dressed in native costumes, prepared foods, and shared with the church what they had learned. Shown, from left, are Santana Taylor, Delia Turner, Katelyn Sappington, Audrey Bryant, and Marlee Sappington.

6. Maranatha Church, Mt. Olive, is hosting a bow shoot and wild game supper Mar. 17. Bow shoot, 11 a.m., with prizes to the top three scores; supper at 6 p.m. Free admission. Al Stone, speaker.

7. Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will open its new campus Mar. 25 at 3000 Hampstead Boulevard. The seating capacity of the worship center is 1325, with educational space for adults, preschool, and children.

8. Mt. Zion Church, Independence, will hold a building dedication Mar. 11, beginning 9 a.m., with speakers Randy Turner, Phil Walker, and Stephen Walker, followed by dinner on the grounds and open house.

### STAFF CHANGES

First Church, Louisville, has called Brett Golson as pastor. Golson previously pastored Salem Church, Collins, and is pursuing a PhD at New Orleans Seminary. He is married to Karen Golson and they have four children.



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